

# SOCIAL HYGIENE NEWS



AMERICAN SOCIAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION

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## 6th Annual Joint Statement Shows Teenage VD Cases Increase

"For three consecutive years the number of states and major cities reporting increases in venereal diseases among young people has mounted steadily," Conrad Van Hyning, Executive Director of the American Social Hygiene Association, told reporters at a press conference held at ASHA's headquarters in New York City on February 27.

"In 1957, for example," he continued, "the United States Public Health Service estimated one case of infectious VD was reported every eleven minutes in the under-20-year-old age bracket."

This data is contained in the 6th Annual Joint Statement by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers, the American Venereal Disease Association and the American Social Hygiene Association on Today's Venereal Disease Problem. The Statement, which is compiled from questionnaire replies from all of the 49 state health departments and from the health departments of three territories and 94 major cities in the United States, represents a thorough and authoritative canvassing of the country's venereal disease problems and program needs.

During the past year, increases in teenage VD were reported in 27 states, 2 territories and 39 major cities, and there are indications that there are probably three cases which are undiagnosed for every one that is brought to diagnosis and reported, an annual infected population of 200,000 under 20 years old.

Twenty-two states and 31 cities of 100,000 population have reported increases in the 15-19 age group, and 12 states and 13 cities have reported increases among the 10-14 age group.

The number of states and cities reporting VD "outbreaks," a chain of cases demonstrated to have been prop-

agated from a common source, have also increased significantly.

For the country as a whole, reported infectious syphilis shows a slight increase, 6,685 cases in '58 as against 6,283 in '57; and gonorrhea shows an increase of 3,715 cases. But rates for the country do not measure the extent of the VD problem in individual states and cities, as was indicated from many replies.

Health departments of 34 states, 1 territory and 47 cities reported that rates for large areas tend to conceal high prevalence "problem spots"; and there is a growing practice to pinpoint the areas of greatest incidence for special program planning.

The Colorado Health Department notes that "spot mapping of cases in cities pin-points areas otherwise hidden by over-all city figures." The New Haven Health Department reports a VD rate per 1,000 population figures by census tracts as high as 18.1. The rate for the city is 4.2. The Louisville Health Department reports 70 per cent of its total syphilis is an area serving only 15 per cent of the population.

In Buffalo, N. Y., 10 of 72 census tracts supply 80 per cent of early (less than one year duration) syphilis and gonorrhea.

The statement also indicates the importance of VD case reporting by private physicians. It is interesting that, with three exceptions, all state health departments that consider their morbidity data reliable show better than 40 per cent reporting of total syphilis by private physicians.

Philadelphia notes that a new State regulation promulgated in 1958, requiring the reporting of all reactive serological tests for syphilis by public and private laboratories has already resulted in increased morbidity reporting, which indicates that previous

DR. SOPHIA M. ROBISON JOINS  
ASHA RESEARCH COMMITTEE  
ON ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR



Dr. Sophia M. Robison

The appointment of Dr. Sophia M. Robison as a member of the American Social Hygiene Association's Research Committee on Adolescent Behavior was announced by Conrad Van Hyning, ASHA Executive Director.

Citing Dr. Robison as "a welcome addition to a distinguished committee," Mr. Van Hyning pointed out that she brings to the group a wealth of experience in social research and in the problems of children and youth both on a national and local level.

A sociologist, Dr. Robison is Professor Emeritus, New York School of Social Work, Columbia University.

Currently, she is Assistant Director of the New York City Juvenile Delinquency Project which was established to make a full scale fact-finding survey of how the community's public and private agencies are fighting juvenile delinquency.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued on page 3)

## FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION — ARE WE PASSING THE BUCK?

The following are excerpts from an article written by Elizabeth S. Force, ASHA Consultant on Family Life Education, which was printed in the February issue of the National Parent-Teacher, the P.-T.A. magazine.

A stable, sound, affectionate family life is universally and urgently needed. Most of us agree that family life can and should be strengthened and improved, that there are far too many family breakups and emotional breakdowns, and that "something" ought to be done. An increasing number of thoughtful people are convinced that one way to reach the heart of the matter is through a respected process called education. In this case it is education with a special slant—education for family life.

Even where such a conviction exists, the movement toward accepting responsibility for educating for family life is sluggish. Home, school, church and various organizations, local and national, grope toward or grapple with, the issue. Until there is a clearer understanding of *who* is doing *what*, there is likely to be considerable buck passing.

### Home Speaks the First Word

Youth groups, family service agencies, public welfare and health departments, and national organizations certainly have significant contributions to make. But family life education begins, of course, in the home—the school of schools. There the child receives his most important and lasting education for family life. His mother and his father are not only his first teachers; they are the most influential teachers he will ever know. From them he learns about family relationships. In earliest childhood he begins to form ideas about family, home, men, women, sex, love, marriage and parenthood.

Two tasks that no other institution can perform as well as the home are these: helping adolescents accept their masculine or feminine roles with confidence, and sharpening their image of love based on devotion, selflessness and shared values.

In its own way each family guides each young person so that he demonstrates, or fails to demonstrate, the ability to respect, accept and understand himself and others. On this ability rests the enjoyment of satisfying family relations in the future . . . the family performs another great task—that of helping youth forge the stability and sense of responsibility

that are part of being an adult and establishing a family of one's own. The home has a tremendous teaching job to do.

But many parents are finding themselves in need of on-the-job training, since their own family life education was lacking or inadequate. Increasing numbers of parents are making a real effort to gain competence so that they will not need to pass the buck. They are joining adult classes and P.-T.A. study-discussion groups. They are reading about family life education.

### The School Carries On

If the home puts forth its best effort, does the school still have a responsibility to see that family life, present and future, is strengthened and improved? It does, and for several reasons.

First, the structure of the family, and indeed our whole society, has changed considerably during the last fifty years. Grandparents, living in a world that differs radically from the one in which they raised their families, no longer feel competent to tell their grown children how to rear their own youngsters. Here we have a gap in the transmission of family life education from one generation to the next. It is this gap that the schools can help to bridge.

Second, the school is the only institution that can reach practically all children over a long period of time. Both the easy-to-reach and the hard-to-reach are in the classrooms.

Nor should we forget that many thousands of youngsters are not getting the kind of home education which will serve them well, because their parents either did not receive such an education themselves or are not equipped to pass it on to their children. Or their homes may be broken by death, divorce, or the desertion of a parent. Reliable reports, such as the 1950 census, tell us that from a fourth to a third of all adolescents live in broken homes. For these young people the school feels a grave concern, and accepts added responsibility.

For example, the school can aid the adolescent in acquiring sound knowledge and appreciation of his physical, social and emotional development.

The content of family life education for adolescents can be illustrated by typical questions used to guide young people's study and discussion:

Why do we need to study the family? What qualities of character and

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

"Sex Education That Makes Sense" was the topic of a talk given by Dr. Franklin R. Fitch, executive director of the Illinois Social Hygiene League, at a Parent-Teacher Meeting held in Kankakee, Ill., recently.

Dr. Fitch, who is also third vice-president of the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers and associate medical director of the Northwestern University Medical School Clinics, has been engaged in social hygiene education since 1930.

The increase in venereal diseases among teenagers has sparked a workshop for high school teachers in Dayton, Ohio. It will be held April 15 under the auspices of the Social Hygiene Association of Dayton and Montgomery County, of which Mrs. Russell D. Arnold is executive director.

Twenty-one thousand, three hundred and eighty-seven persons sought information and services from the Kansas City Social Hygiene Society in 1958, P. K. Houdek, executive secretary, told the Society at its annual meeting on February 4. At this meeting, Francis C. Quilty, prominent attorney, was re-elected president. Other Kansas City officers include: the Rev. Charles B. Marrs and Mrs. J. J. Butler, vice-presidents; Dr. Alice Marsh, secretary, and Lewis W. Clymer, treasurer.

Mrs. Elizabeth S. Force was director of a Social Hygiene Workshop sponsored by the Indianapolis Social Hygiene Society. The workshop, a one-day Family Life Institute, was held under the direction of Mrs. Meredith Nicholson, Jr., executive secretary of the Indianapolis Association in March. Its purpose was to create an awareness of the family life education opportunities present in the area of health education.

Frank McFall, ASHA Regional Director, was principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Council meeting which was held in January.

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## Family Life Education

(Continued from page 2)

personality contribute to being a good mate and parent?

Such questions as these represent only a small part of the stuff of which family life education is made. We need to draw upon home economics, history, literature, biology, psychology, child development, law, medicine, sociology, religion, and other fields in our effort to find the answers. Much of this can be done in the classroom.

But it is not only boys and girls and their parents who can profit from family life education. Teachers too need the information, insights and understanding it provides. Each student, in a sense, brings his family to school with him.

Thus if teachers are to do a good job, they need to have both breadth and depth of understanding about family life. And this means that they need to work closely with parents.

One way of doing this is through the high school P.T.A. Here parents and teachers not only come to know one another but can arrive at an understanding of their shared and separate responsibilities.

### A Partnership Effort

What other steps can be taken to cement the teacher-parent partnership? There are many. One of the most natural is for parents and teachers to exchange visits. Also, parents can be encouraged to participate in school projects; they can even be used as educational resources by the teacher. And both the school and the home can be represented in curriculum-building conferences.

We do not need to wait until both home and school find all the answers, for that will never happen. In the field of family life education there is urgent need for research and study, as there is for applying new findings.

It is not for the home or the school to do the whole job of family life education, but for each to do that part of the task which it is best equipped to do. This must be a cooperative enterprise with a "we'll do it" rather than a "you do it" attitude. Here is one buck that cannot be passed.

Copies of the full article are available in limited quantities from the American Social Hygiene Association, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.

## EPHRAIM ROOS GOMBERG NAMED DIRECTOR

Mrs. Katherine B. Oettinger, Chief of the Children's Bureau, announced that Ephraim Roos Gomberg, Pennsylvania attorney, has been appointed Director of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth. As Director, Mr. Gomberg will carry out the directive of the President's National Committee for the Conference, of which Mrs. Rollin Brown is chairman.

A former educator and newspaperman, Mr. Gomberg has recently been serving as a member of the board of directors and the executive board of the Pennsylvania Citizens' Association for Health and Welfare, where he was chairman of a committee on court and correctional services connected with the State's attack on juvenile delinquency and its attempts to strengthen correctional services for adults.

### SOCIAL HYGIENE DAY THEME SET

The theme for Social Hygiene Day to be observed April 29 is "Family Strength Is World Strength," Conrad Van Hyning, ASHA executive director, announced.

The April issue of Social Hygiene News will be largely devoted to an examination of the role of the family in modern society.

### INTERNATIONAL UNION TO MEET IN LONDON

The biennial General Assembly of the International Union Against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses will be held in London, England, October 13-17, 1959.

The Assembly, which will convene under the auspices of the British Federation Against the Venereal Diseases will consider as main themes:

1. Studies on the psychological aspects of promiscuity.
  2. Problems of migrant populations as they affect the venereal disease situation in different countries.
  3. The evolution of the treponematoses in the Middle and Far Eastern countries.
- There will also be a clinical meeting organized by the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases.

## MENTAL HEALTH WEEK OBSERVES "OPERATION FRIENDSHIP"

"Operation Friendship" will be the theme of the 11th Mental Health Week to be held April 26-May 2.

Purpose of the project, which is directed by the National Association for Mental Health, and co-sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, is to bring 750,000 visitors to the mental hospitals—one visitor from the outside for every patient on the inside, in order to:

1. Prove to the mentally ill that their relatives, friends and neighbors really care.
2. Promote a better understanding of the mentally ill as people, and of their needs, and to reduce the stigma of mental illness.
3. Demonstrate the hopeful, new developments in the care and treatment of the mentally ill.

Local arrangements for "Operation Friendship" will be coordinated by affiliates of the NAMH, working closely with mental hospital directors.

### Dr. Sophia M. Robison

(Continued from page 1)

The New York City Juvenile Delinquency Project is under the direction of Dr. Robert M. MacIver, and was initiated in 1956 following a recommendation by Mayor Robert F. Wagner that "a scientific fact-finding survey of anti-delinquency programs be set up."

Dr. Robison has also served as Research Consultant on Delinquency for the Children's Bureau; as Information Specialist for the National Probation and Parole Association and as Research Coordinator for Health and Welfare Interdisciplinary Research, Adelphi College.

Her publications include works on demography, delinquency, and a forthcoming text book, "Juvenile Delinquency—A Sociological and Psychological Analysis."

COPIES OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL JOINT STATEMENT ON TODAY'S VD CONTROL PROBLEM MAY BE OBTAINED BY WRITING TO THE AMERICAN SOCIAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION, 1790 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N.Y.

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# Social Hygiene News

## Joint VD Statement

(Continued from page 1)

reporting from non-clinic sources was unreliable.

The statement also shows that most health departments consider shortage of personnel a definite problem in handling venereal diseases, and most states and cities report a real need for Federal support of state and local programs.

Based on consideration of the data gathered, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers, the American Venereal Disease Association, and the American Social Hygiene Association recommend:

1. A minimum Federal appropriation for VD control of \$5.8 million in fiscal 1960, with at least \$2.8 million for grants to states. This would be an increase of \$400,000 over the present appropriation.

2. That state and local health departments be encouraged to plan and make epidemiologic services available to their private physicians and to seek such additional funds as are needed to implement their plans.

3. That a program of social and health education be directed towards the teenage group and that the White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1960 be encouraged to give special consideration to this teenage VD problem.

## Pensacola Forms Social Hygiene Committee

A Social Hygiene Committee was formed February 15 in Pensacola, Fla.

A member of the Community Council, the committee was organized to provide those conditions of living, environment and personal conduct which best protect the family as an institution; to educate for personal and family living; to strengthen and stabilize family life; and to conduct research and investigation into adolescent sex behavior.

Under the research phase of its program, the committee will study the factors involved in venereal diseases, incident and epidemic outbreaks, community conditions of prostitution and related vice.

Public information will be furnished about the continuing hazards of venereal diseases, about the need for adequate support of state and local VD control programs, and about problems affecting family life, divorce, illegitimacy and family breakdown.

It will seek to serve youth in the armed forces "through improvement of community environment near military establishments," to parents through distribution of family life publications, to professional workers through demonstrations, conferences, regional projects for teachers and other training devices.

Percy Pentecost, principal at Ferry Pass Junior High School, was elected chairman.

Other committee members are City Manager Oliver J. Semmes; the Rev.

Fred Chance, president of the Pensacola Ministerial Association; B. G. Tennant, chief sanitation officer at the County Health Department; Major S. A. Wallace, chief shore patrol officer, NAS; L. A. Johnson, vice-president of the Community Council; Dr. Henry Ashmore, president of the Community Council; Mrs. Irene Hicks, executive secretary of the Community Council, and Frank McFall, regional director of the American Social Hygiene Association.

## FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION MEETS IN WASHINGTON

More than 1,000 professional workers and volunteers will attend a biennial meeting of the Family Service Association in Washington, D. C., April 1 through 3.

Clark W. Blackburn, director of the Family Service Association, a federation of 286 family counseling agencies throughout the United States and Canada, has announced plans for technical sessions on such topics as current and projected research in the family service field, special problems of the aging, needs of fatherless families, use of group treatment methods, and approaches to family life education.

President of the association is Eugene H. Freedheim, Cleveland attorney; chairman for the meeting is Perry B. Hall, executive secretary of the Pittsburgh Family and Children's Service.



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